

## **“RTA – Lite” Concept – TPB Regional Governance Structure *DRAFT***

### **Governance Structure Objective**

The primary objective of the governance structure is the rapid and cost-effective implementation, operation and maintenance of Concept 3 within which is assumed a ‘state of good repair’ for all existing transit operators’ services fleets and infrastructure. Other objectives include ongoing public involvement, regional service coordination in a broad sense, marketing and transit advocacy in advance of a potential referendum and data collection and distribution.

### **Framework for new Transit Funding**

An additional complicating factor for creating a governance institutional framework for the Atlanta region is continued uncertainty regarding new funding for transit. This is a key factor for implementing a scalable governance structure. The governance structure will initially focus on a going forward basis. All incumbent transit institutional and funding structures will remain in place as they are with each retaining their existing authorities and responsibilities. While collaboration between the existing operators will certainly be encouraged it is difficult to impose mandates without new funding. The initial focus of the new governance structure will be the implementation of new expanded services and infrastructure as described in Concept 3 rather than the management of existing funding, assets and services. **The ultimate governance objective remains an evolution to a confederation model similar to the Munich MVV, as identified by some Board members.**

### **An Institution that will Evolve**

The initial composition of the new governance structure would likely be a codification of many of the roles and responsibilities that the Transit Planning Board is already serving. The next step evolutionary entity would continue to operate largely through consensus with all participants at the local, regional and state level acting in a good-faith effort to facilitate the funding and implementation of Concept 3. As new funding for transit outside of existing sources is implemented the roles, responsibilities and authorities of the new governance structure would increase as needed to facilitate implementation and regional coordination and cooperation.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Evolutionary governance – as described above.
- Pay to play – as the institutional structure begins, every representative is at the table in a good-faith position to participate and assist in the implementation of Concept 3.
- Representative participation – the representation on the governance structure will reflect a weighted system within which one or multiple factors contribute to influence allocation – funding or contributions, service delivered, service consumed, passenger miles, regional benefits etc.

- The governance institution will not operate service or own assets. This can be revisited as the governance structure evolves.
- The governance institution will be a driver of regional transit policy.
- All expansions of the regional transit system will include provisions that assume a “state of good repair” for the incumbent transit services.
- Jurisdictions can be added and the scope of the structure can increase over time.
- The structure will facilitate collaborative inter-agency implementation and seek to optimize the use and strengths of the existing staffs and assets for cost-effective service and project delivery.

The TPB staff was instructed at the August Board meeting to develop a regional transit governance strawman based on the principles that were developed and refined during the board work session. The strawman has attributes taken from the Seattle Sound Transit governance structure, Chicago Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and other attributes developed by TPB staff. This draft also incorporates comments from the September TPB Senior Staff meeting. The Transit Planning Board, as it is currently constituted, will sunset following its final meeting in December of 2008. This strawman describes a transitional phase governance structure that can begin the evolution of a stronger governance structure once new funding is identified for investment in regional transit infrastructure and services.

The primary guiding principle for the development of the strawman is the concept of a governance structure that is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. It will be a structure that initially is focused largely on issues on a “going forward” basis with a focus on expanding the transit system through major capital investments. The existing transit institutions (i.e. agencies, operators and local governments involved) remain as they are without impact to their **existing** operations, funding (local and federal formula) or governing body authorities. The governance structure forms a basic framework within which investment decisions can be made with **new** funding. The focus of the board will be the implementation of Concept 3.

In addition to a strong public participation focus, there are three primary constituents for the “RTA-lite” – the local and state governments, the signatory agencies to the quad-party agreement (ARC, GDOT, GRTA, MARTA) and all of the transit operators, to include the smaller shuttle operators such as the Atlantic Station Shuttle, universities, Community Improvement Districts, etc.

### Structure and Functionality

The newly constituted evolution of the TPB, presumably starting in early 2009, will have similar functionality to the TPB but will formalize the structure with a few additions. It will remain a small entity that will rely on inter-agency staffs and resources for much of its work. This is in response to the board stated desire to not implement a new bureaucracy and to continue fostering inter-agency cooperative relationships. Given the evolutionary nature of this strawman the intent is to design a base for a governance institution that can assume much larger roles through increased authority should new funding get allocated, major capital projects get implemented or new regional services instituted in the

future. The evolution of the governance structure to assume new authorities and responsibilities will be linked to its successes.

This primary function of the “RTA-lite” is a planning/new funding allocation function. It includes several discrete functions:

- Lobbying efforts related to funding and implementation of Concept 3
- Continued public involvement and education regarding transit in the Atlanta Region, Concept 3 and general support of efforts for funding, particularly in support of a referendum
- Programming of projects within Concept 3
- Identification of project sponsors for the investments proposed in Concept 3
- Fostering of innovative implementation and procurement practices for Concept 3 (such as PPI, etc.)
- Development of a unified state and federal transit legislative agenda including prioritized appropriation requests
- Ongoing updates and revisions of Concept 3 on a standard transportation planning “3C” principle basis – continuous, comprehensive and cooperative

Within this framework and its primary focus on implementation of Concept 3, the governance structure will have responsibility for several additional secondary functions that have either been initiated under the TPB or have been identified by the TPB as functions desired for further regional successes in transit. Since the TPB will have defined the future transit network and a governance path for its implementation the focus of the new structure will shift to advocating for new funds for its implementation at all levels (local, regional, state and federal) and programming decisions for implementation. These additional functions for the new structure include:

- Regional Service Coordination including facilitating regional agreements for integrated services, regional “back office” agreements for items such as bus maintenance, joint procurements, vehicle standardization, facilities planning, joint service planning, etc.
  - Human Services Transportation (HST) and paratransit service coordination and integration
  - Customer information and communication coordination, such as regional system maps, inter-agency communication protocols, travel training programs, etc.
  - Fare coordination
- Regional data collection and dissemination through publishing of regional ridership data and other statistics to the public with an eye to establishing a future public performance monitoring system for regional transit, both for service and implementation performance tracking
- A public involvement group that will be given a very clearly defined mission and set of tasks related to establishing public trust and feedback loops for the implementation of Concept 3, attracting new funding and improving regional transit services – this group will become the network of grassroots advocates for the funding and implementation of Concept 3 and will be eventually linked to the performance measurement group

- Ensure accessible meetings (time and location and broadcast and publishing of meetings)
- Maintenance of the web site to include current meeting materials and meeting video stream archive
- Ongoing education and public involvement
- Ensure transparency of board actions, information and decision-making

### Existing Planning and Implementation Process

The new governance structure will fit within the existing MPO process. It will be responsible for clarifying the process for which transit projects are advanced into the RTP and TIP (STIP) development process as governed by the Quad Party agreement for transportation planning in the Atlanta Region. It will advance a slate of projects into the MPO process for consideration, in addition to setting the context for a universe of transit projects (Concept 3) which become the framework for long range investment planning from which projects are programmed into the slate. The attached diagram illustrates how the “RTA-lite” will work to feed the MPO process. The “RTA-lite” will use existing implementation frameworks for implementation but will set and measure performance standards when a project is assigned to a sponsor.

Additionally the “RTA-lite” will have relationships with regular board (It is suggested this Board initially be the TPB Board as currently constituted) report-outs on the activities of several regional committees and groups to include:

- ARC Transportation and Air Quality Committee (TAQC) – the MPO process
- ARC Transit Operators Subcommittee – federal formula funds distribution and designated recipient functions
- Regional Breeze Committee – fare media implementation and fare coordination
- Get Georgia Moving – transportation state legislative advocacy

**The “RTA-lite” is designed to form the framework for new transit funds for the region.** As such it is designed to evolve into a full-service planning, project programming, implementation oversight and public accountability agency to support transit infrastructure implementation. It will be a framework that will evolve as needed, and will work closely with, and on behalf of the three constituents as described earlier. In its initial start-up phase it will likely concentrate on continued public education and legislative education and advocacy efforts but as it becomes clear what the funding/referendum framework will be, the “RTA-lite” will work in a public education/marketing function and finally after new funding is appropriated it will activate its performance monitoring functions for the projects and services for which new funding is appropriated.

### Board Composition and Identification (Public Branding)

The “RTA-lite” governance structure will require a branding exercise both for the name of the entity, the public name of the entity, the name of the program (Concept 3) in order to facilitate the strong public identification with the entity, the plan and especially the accountability for new funding related to new services and infrastructure.

In the early constitution of the “RTA-lite” it is likely to be the same board members as the TPB is presently constituted. Adoption of the “RTA-lite” governance and program (Concept 3) through formal action will be required for an entity to sit at the table.

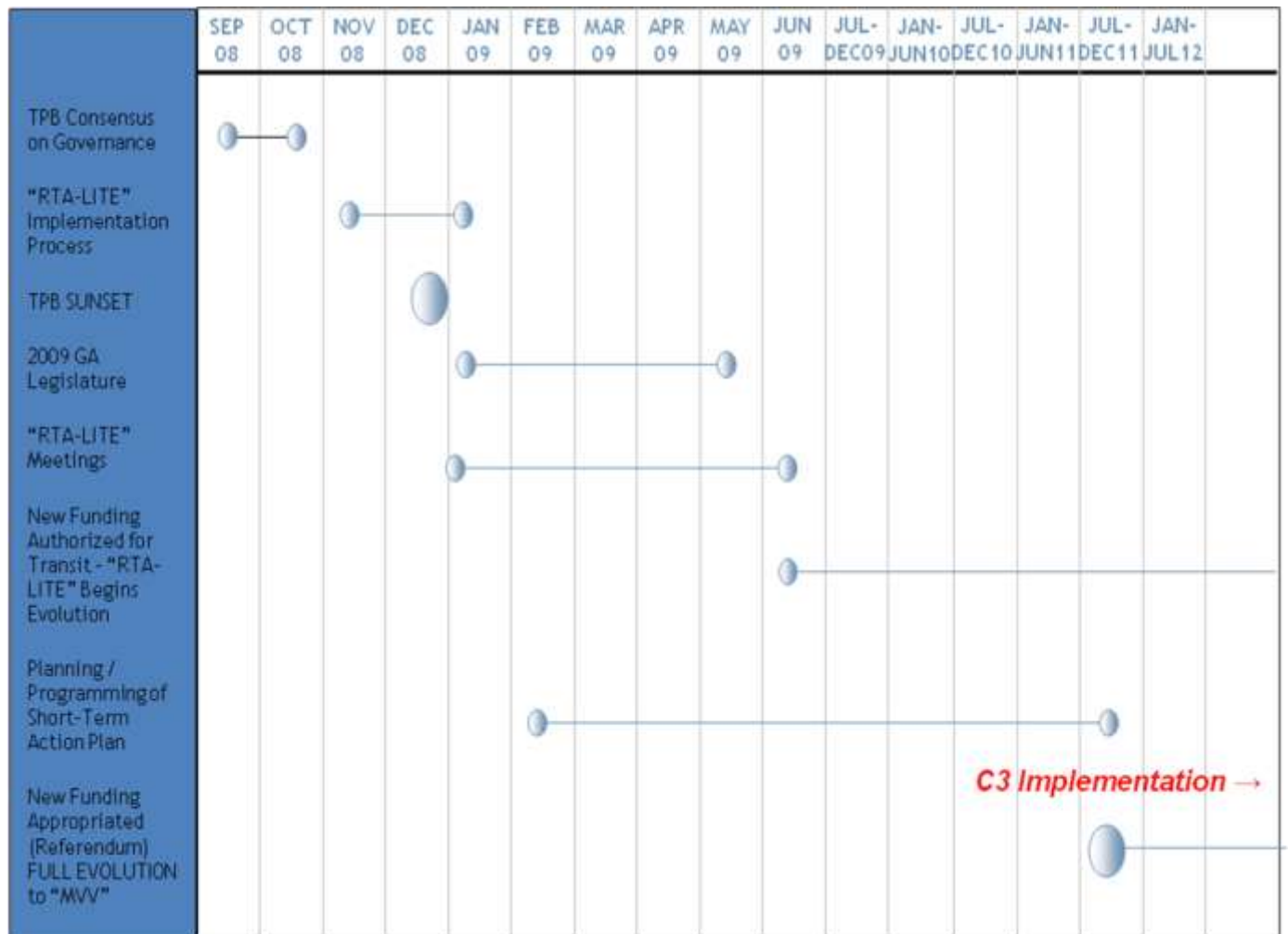
### Unresolved Issues

- How should implementation take place?
  - Committee of ARC TAQC
  - Confederation through “Quad-Party Agreements
  - Series of Intergovernmental (MOU- Memoranda of Understanding) agreements
  - New Agency Charter / is there a need for a newly constituted entity
- How should the new agency be financed / staffed?
- Should the new governance structure sunset?
- How should a work program be developed?
- How should the initial board be constituted – should it be the existing TPB Board members?

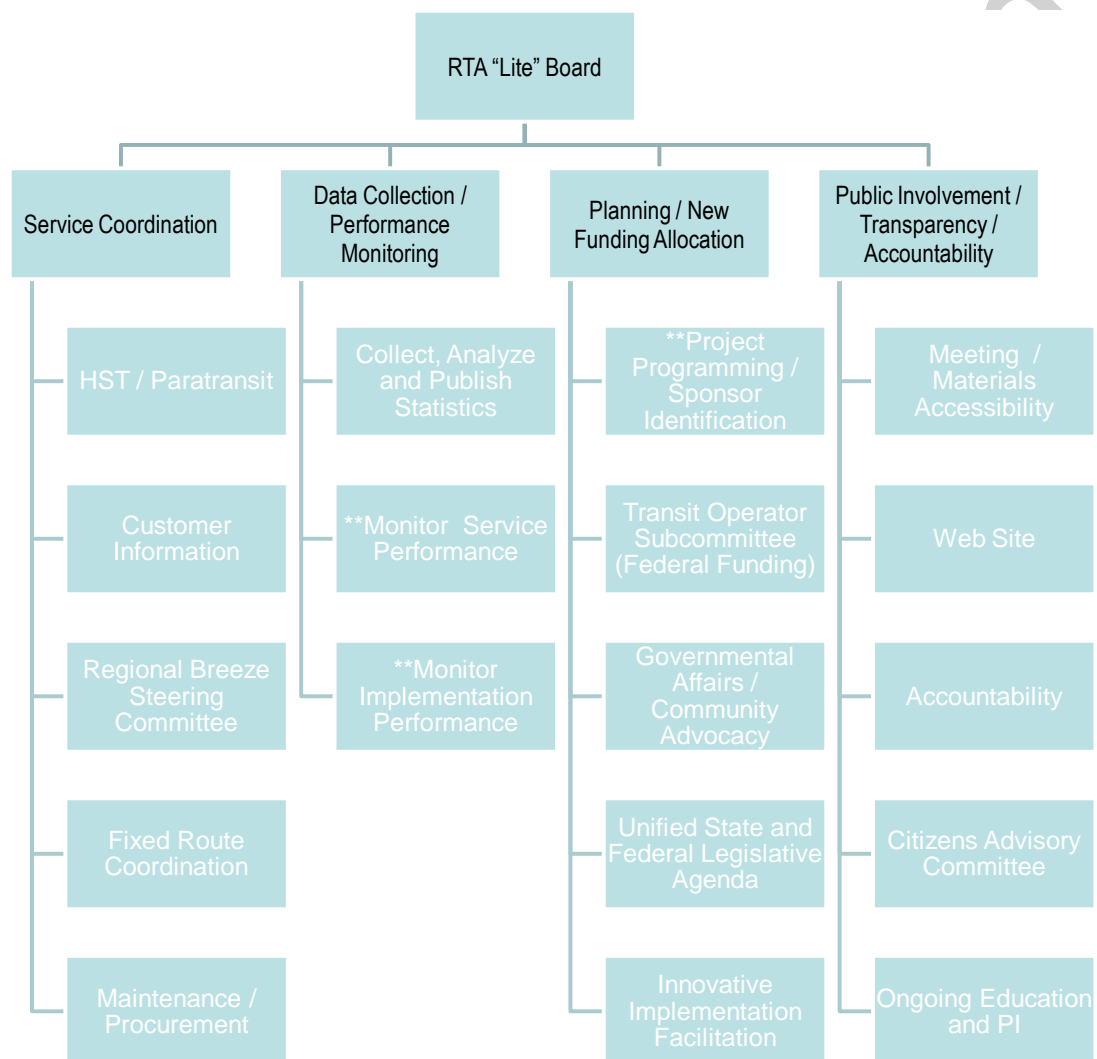
### Potential Timeline for Implementation

The “RTA-lite” initiation schedule is as follows:

1. October TPB meeting – consensus on “RTA-lite” interim/evolutionary, next step framework governance structure (this document and accompanying structure figures)
2. November TPB Committee meeting – start implementation process for interim “RTA-lite” through action(s) necessary by all parties to establish Transit Policy Committee of current TPB Board members – *note this is an **interim** step to establish the organization, keep the focus and momentum, and allow time for formal constitution*
3. December TPB meeting – sunset of TPB and wrap-up – final approvals if needed
4. January 2009 and beyond – “RTA-lite” established and process started to formally evolve into a constituted entity, organization is immediately involved in transportation funding advocacy and education as it relates to Concept 3 and transit



## “RTA – lite” Functional Framework Diagram



\*\* - indicates a role that will be established and formalized in next evolution of the governance structure.

## **“RTA – lite” Relationship with MPO Process and Constituents**

